

Campus Forum

Nuclear annihilation is not the average dinner table discussion topic. It ranks somewhere near swine flu in cheeriness and near income taxes in inspiration. But the threat of nuclear war is something we need to face in our discussions if we are to avoid facing it in real life.

Last week, the student government at the Harrisburg Area Community College agreed to hold a referendum for the student body to decide if the administration there should stockpile cyanide pills to facilitate suicide in the event of a nuclear war. Now our own Student Government Association is buzzing over the issue.

The topic is a highly polarized one. In one corner there are the ardent advocates of a strong defense. Peace through strength, fight to win and negotiation from a position of strength are popular doctrines. And then there is M.A.D.--Mutual Assured Destruction--which claims that we must avoid a nuclear war at all costs, but the only way to do it is to be sincerely prepared to push the button.

In the opposite corner are the radical anti-nuke protesters, given to dramatic displays and civil disobedience to publicize their opposition. Some are honestly concerned and seek a rational solution. Others demand an immediate freeze.

In the middle are lots of Americans who are concerned but a little baffled. They don't want to die, but they don't know how to control their potential killer, so they ignore the issue or vacillate.

One thing is clear: The issue is complicated. There are no simple solutions.

There are arguments to be made for an increase in offensive strength. The SALT I, SALT II and START agreements have not succeeded in limiting nuclear weapons. They are difficult to verify and full of loopholes. The U.S.S.R. has a history of military paranoia and is not likely to accept any plan for disarmament. And our allies depend on us for both military and psychological leadership. Also, large numbers of people could be unemployed and large sums of money removed from the economy if arms production is halted.

There are also arguments on the disarmament side. Nuclear weapons are tremendously expensive. They have the capacity to cause unprecedented death and suffering--the experts argue over how many millions would survive with any semblance of modern life. Additionally, M.A.D. tends to deteriorate into a struggle for superiority--a never-ending struggle. And an accident is always possible.

Beyond these arguments, there are complicating factors that influence the realistic possibilities for a solution. Political competition in both the U.S. and U.S.S.R. forces leaders to change positions and promotes vagueness. Kremlin power struggles and American elections can delay negotiations or affect cooperation. Neither side trusts the other. Third World countries have the capacity to start a nuclear exchange without superpower hostilities. And technology always offers a better system, but no strategic nuclear weapon can be tested under realistic conditions short of a real war. We don't know if they will work as planned.

So simply calling for arms reductions is a nice gesture but it doesn't solve the problem. Similarly, demanding a strong defense seems safe but may actually make nuclear war more likely.

We agree with the S.G.A. draft resolution that suicide is not the answer. Suicide is an insidious device to avoid the problem.

What is required is a series of actions aimed at all of the individual considerations, rather than the problem as a whole. We agree that discussion is part of the answer. Many people need to make an effort to understand the issues. And those who understand them need to make a serious effort to honestly appraise the rest of us. Thus, we applaud S.G.A.'s suggestion of a campus forum to discuss the issues and solutions.

We believe, however, that discussion is not the whole answer. If we're ever going to get anywhere, each of us must take action. We must make our concerns known to the Congress and the President. We must take the first step to breaking down cultural barriers to understanding. We must actively seek to inform those who remain unaware of the issues involved.

It is on this basis that we propose the following steps:

--The S.G.A. should attempt to arrange either an exchange of students with the Soviet Union, or arrange a trip to the Soviet Union for a student representative who could report back first hand.

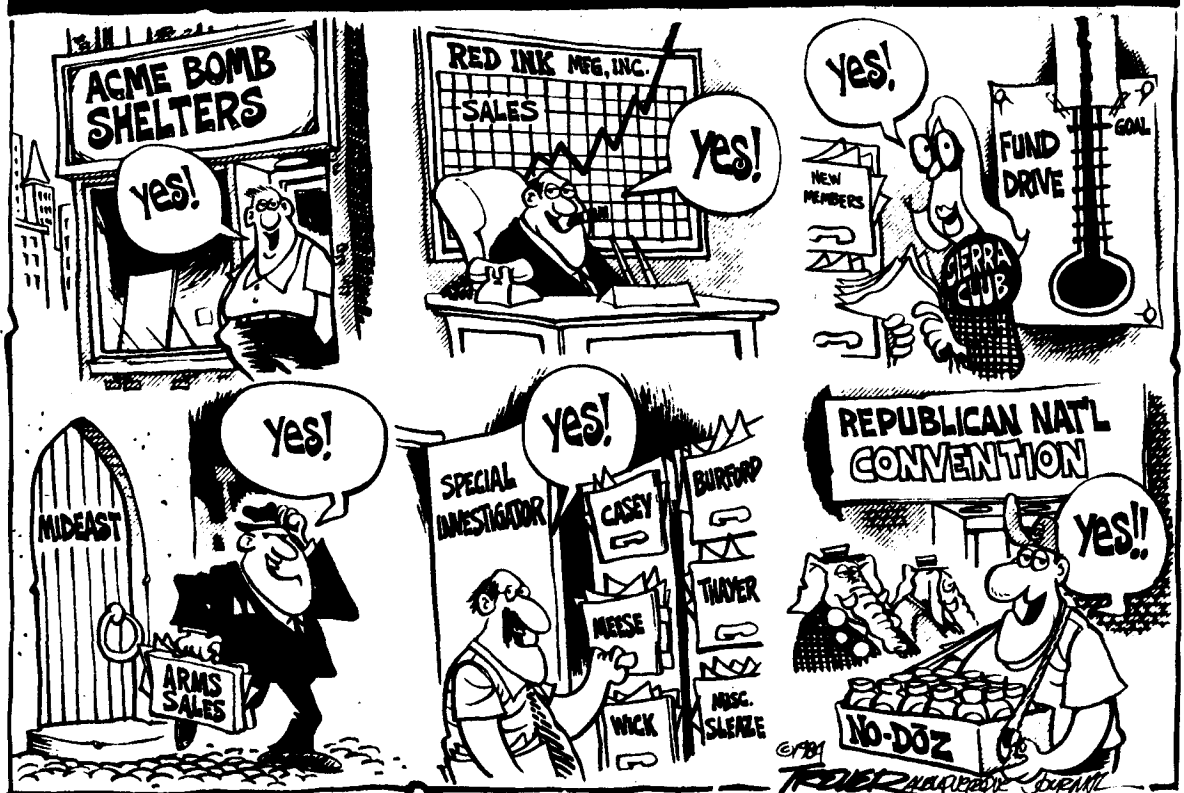
--The Student Activities Office should invite speakers from the Soviet embassy or other Eastern European nations to present their sides of the story.

--Capitol Campus faculty who have experience in arms control and Soviet studies should be invited to address the student population.

--The S.G.A. should support a letter-writing drive to encourage and help students express their views to government officials.

We realize these are small steps. But we think concrete actions like these are a start toward promoting real movement on the nuclear arms issue. We hope that, when combined with similar efforts across the country, they will lead to a lasting solution.

'ARE YOU BETTER OFF THAN YOU WERE 4 YEARS AGO?'



Contest is mere flesh parade



By Beverly Halbrook

Capitol Campus is promoted to the general public and to new students as a campus noted for its small size, its personability, its staff and the age and caliber of its students. The students seem, at a glance, to be intelligent people concerned with important issues, such as the rights of women.

It is a shame that this image of Capitol can be shattered by an event such as the "Legs and Buns Contest."

The contest exploits both the male and female student and is contrary to everything this campus is supposed to represent. The posters alone are disgusting. They say the contest is all in the "spirit of fun," but being displayed to a gawking group of people like a side of beef hardly constitutes "fun."

The contest raises several questions that need to be considered by everyone on this campus. Who is so experienced in looking at legs and backends that she or he can give an expert opinion on what the "perfect parts" look like? Also, what about the people who are not chosen to compete? Is this campus as an institution of learning going to decide who is beautiful, sexy, and handsome and who is not? The thought of someone being

considered inferior because of their legs and posteriors is inexcusable.

Come on, folks! Don't you think it is time to grow up?

Capitol Campus is an upper level campus for mature people to gain knowledge, not a refuge for career freshmen.

To the Editor:

The October 18 issue of *Capitol Times* contained an inaccurate statement. The new Capitol Campus Memorial Scholarship is Not the first scholarship program established at our campus. The Capitol Campus Faculty Women's Club has offered both grants and loans to undergraduate students through the CCFWC Scholarship and Loan Fund, established in 1971. The club presented its latest grant of \$500 at the spring graduation in May, 1984. Last week, the club presented the university with a check for \$1185 for use as short-term and long-term loans for undergraduate students. The new CC Memorial Scholarship is the first endowed scholarship program at this campus.

Joanne M. Smith
Chairman, CCFWC Scholarship
Member, Committee on Academic and Standards, Awards and Scholarships

Capitol Times

Thursday, Nov. 1, 1984
Vol. 19 No. 5

Published by students of Penn State's Capitol
Campus, Middletown, Pa. 17057

The *Capitol Times* welcomes letters from readers. Letters intended for publication must be signed by the author and indicate his/her club or organizational affiliation, if any. The *Capitol Times* reserves the right to edit or reject letters at its discretion.

Letters published do not necessarily reflect the views of this newspaper or its staff.

Tony Perry.....Editor-in-chief
Neil Myers.....Co-Editor
Jeffrey Shatzer.....Production Mgr.
James Ferguson.....Advertising Mgr.
Mike Dudek.....Graphic Artist
Beverly Halbrook.....Sales Rep.
Don Strausburger.....Sr. Reporter/
Reviews Editor
Catherine Madigan.....Briefs Editor
Janice Waardenburg.....Composer
Lisa Mauss.....Photographer
Bob Price.....Photographer
Rob Saylor.....Photographer
Kathleen Heraghty.....Production
Assistant

Staff Writers

Annette Childs
Mark Edquid
Michelle Lackey
Joseph L. Michalsky
Erik M. Morris
Bill Oshman
Ken Stiggers
Angelo Vecchio

Adviser.....Mark S. Guralnick

Printed at the Press and Journal, Middletown. Text disks processed Jednota Printery, Middletown.